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OXC-5894

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31 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy for Field Activities, OSA

SUBJECT : OXCART Sightings

1. Since 12 April 1963, the OXCART vehicle has been sighted by five (5) commercial aircraft. Three of these incidents were considered serious enough to warrant debriefing of the commercial crews.

a. On 12 April 1963, Captain Owen, pilot of American Airlines Flight 17, viewed the mission aircraft during a refueling exercise. In his debriefing, Capt. Owen described the aircraft as one not currently in the USAF inventory and most likely an experimental plane.

b. On 2 October 1963, Captain Owen, again piloting American Airlines Flight 17, viewed the mission vehicle on what he described as a parallel course at a distance of approximately five (5) miles. In his debriefing, he estimated that he viewed the aircraft for at least five (5) minutes and alleged that the plane veered to the right and over-crossed his bow in a climbing mode with the distance between the two (2) aircraft at the point of crossing less than the required 2,000 feet. So close was the mission vehicle that the stewardess on the flight heard it pass over and inquired about it. Captain Owen expressed displeasure at military aircraft using commercial air space.

c. On 21 October 1963, Captain L. M. Peet, pilot of United Airlines Flight 737, observed the mission vehicle when the latter passed in front of him. During the preliminary inquiry, Captain Peet accurately described the vehicle although he indicated that he saw it only for a few seconds.

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d. On 25 and 31 July 1963, sightings of a lesser degree were most probably made by American Airlines jets. In these cases, however, it was the judgment of Security Staff, OSA, that the aircraft were sufficiently removed from one another to preclude detailed observations.

2. In none of the above instances was there a danger of mid-air collision and no near miss reports were filed by commercial pilots. However, the pilots have indicated their intention to file a report with their commander

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3. I am aware of the continuing close coordination between OD/OSA and FAA in establishing SOA's, etc., in support of OXCART. However, I would appreciate your assurance that all measures possible are being utilized by [REDACTED] Operations, Flight Test personnel and FAA Air Traffic Control to preclude sightings as well as near misses.

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Chief, Security Staff  
OSA

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SS/OSA [REDACTED] anw/31 Oct 1963

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